# A Note on 'Rigvedic Verses Rv-6.61,9 and 10 devoted to river Saraswati'

**VR Patil (email:vrpmet@yahoo.com)**

Hymn **Rv-6.61** contains **14 verses** in total and is dedicated to **river Saraswati.** In the present note, we shall focus our attention on only two verses **Rv-6.61,9** and **10 [1]**.

**Rv-6.61,9***:* **सा नो॒विश्वा॒ अति॒द्विष॒: स्वसृ॑रन्या ऋ॒तावंरी । अत॒न्नहे॑व॒सूर्य॑: ॥**

*sā no **viśvā** ati **dviṣaḥ** svasṝ́ranyā ṛtāvarī | atannaheva **sūryaḥ** ||*

# She hath spread us beyond all foes, beyond her Sisters, Holy One, As **Surya** spreadeth out the days.

**Rv-6.61,10**: **उ॒त नः॑ प्रि॒या प्रि॒यासु॑ स॒प्तस्वं॑सा॒सुजु॑ष्टा । सर॑स्वती॒ स्तोम्यां भूत् ॥**

*uta naḥ **priyā priyāsu saptasvasā** sujuṣṭā | **sarasvatī stomyā** bhūt ||*

**#** Yea, she most **dear amid dear stream**, **Seven-sisters**, graciously inclined, **Sarasvati** hath earned our praise.

In the verse **Rv-6.61,9**; The Poet has credited river **Saraswati**, for reaching to other region crossing all her sisters/ **स्वसृ.** In other words, earlier the ancestors of the Rigvedic Priests were based on the bank of river **Saraswati**. As per Poet, it is due to **Saraswati,** they could win countries of the enemies and hence brought their area under the control of the **Aryas**. Poet has compared the expansion of their realm very similar to daily travel path of God **Surya**/the **Sun**.

In the next verse, **Rv-6.61,10** the Poet has used the phrase **सप्तस्वसा/** ***saptasvasā*** means **Seven Sisters**. However, he did not use the well-known Rigvedic term **'Sapta-Sindhu'** found in the hymns of other Mandalas. Please note that in **Mandala-6**, '**Sapta-Sindhu**' phrase is conspicuously absent. Even in the entire hymn, the Composer did not use the word '**Sindhu**'.

Application of the phrase ***priyā priyāsu saptasvasā*** in the **verse-10** implies that the Composer expresses his love for other rivers too, but also makes it clear that in his mind, river **Saraswati** has a very special place and therefore, he specifically says that he enjoys praising her as she surely deserves the same. This clearly exhibits since the time of the ancestors of the pre-Rigvedic Rishis, the **Aryas** had very strong emotional bonding with river **Saraswati**.

Above description clearly manifests that a long back, the spread of the kingdom of the **Aryas** began from the bank of river **Saraswati,** but it actually occurred in the **west direction** like the every day's movement of the **Sun** i. e. from the **East to West** direction and then the expansion even crossed the region where the **Seven Sisters** flow (beyond **Sapta-Sindhu** area).

Now a fresh question crops up, 'when did the expansion of **Aryas'** kingdom occur?'

## Exploring Rigvedic references for possible answer to the afore-stated Question

On the basis of the **Family Tree of the Bharata clan**, the sequence of the **Five Early Mandalas** is believed to be; **Mandala-2**, **3**, **4**, **6**, and **7**. As discussed earlier, the Poet of **Mandala-6** has talked about the spread of the kingdom of the **Aryas from east to west**, means it would have taken place earlier to the start of Composition of **Mandala-6** as in this Mandala, there is no reference of river **Sindhu**. In **Mandala-2** and **3**, other than the popular stories like fantastic clashes of **Indra-Vritra** and frequent slaying of **Dasas** and **Dasyus** the permanent enemies of the Priests, there is no mention of **any real war** fought between the different human tribes. Even though **Mandala-7 hymns Rv-7.18; Rv-7.33** and **Rv-7.83** do provide proper description about the **real war story** in the form of the **War of Ten Kings**, but the fact is, **Sudasa** the **Leader of Bharata Tribe** in **Mandala-7** happens to be the son of **Divodasa** the **Bharata Tribe Leader in Mandala-6**. Hence there is no point to consider **Mandala-7** to get the answer to above mentioned question as it was composed after **Mandala-6**. Now out of the **Five Early Mandalas**, **Mandala-4** is the only remaining Mandala that contains references of western rivers like **Sindhu**, **Rasa** and **Sarayu**, but there is no place for river **Saraswati** in it.

Still we shall have a close look at the verse **Rv-4.30,18** that brings out a clash between the **two separate groups of the Aryas [1]**.

**Rv-4.30,18: Arna** and **Citraratha,** both **Aryas**, thou, **Indra**, slewest swift, On yonder side of **Sarayu**,

During Rigvedic period, river **Sarayu** mentioned in the above verse was located to west of river **Sindhu**, and hence the defeat of **Arna** and **Chitraratha** at the hands of **Indra** (in reality, it has to be **Bharatas/Aryas**) indirectly means along with **Bharatas**, the Priests were also present on the bank of **Sarayu**. Hence this reference can be taken as the westward expedition of the **Aryas**. However, the main objection to this hypothesis is due to, the People who lost to **Bharatas** are also identified as the **Aryas**. It mean, the **Bharatas/Aryas** actually defeated **Other Aryas** (**Arna** and **Chitraratha**) who were already living in the western region of **Rigvedic Territory**. Hence in true sense, it cannot be considered as the expansion of the **Aryas realm** but can be termed as an act of invasion of the country of **other Aryas** who were dwelling beyond river **Sindhu** for a long and strongly opposed the **Vedic Philosophy/Indra** as the Poet of the verse says that it is God **Indra** who overpowers **Arna** and **Chitraratha**.

As the **Mandala-6** Poet has specifically highlighted the expansion of kingdom, then there is a need to revisit the text to find out who the other persons from the **warrior class** were capable to carry out the expansion of realm in the past. After going through various **Mandala-6** hymns, in the verse **Rv-6.46,7** is found a clue about the powerful and brave persons [**1**].

**Rv-6.46,7:** All strength and valour that is found, **Indra**, in tribes of **Nahusas**,

and all the **splendid fame** that the **Five Tribes** enjoy Bring, yea, **all manly powers at once**.

In the next verse **Rv-6.46,8**; the Poet has mentioned three types of warrior people namely, **Triski**, **Druhyu** and **Puru** who are fearless and also possess vigorous strength, but are denoted as the rivals of the **Priests/Bharatas**.

Moreover, in the verse **Rv-6.26,7** Poet **Bharadwaja** has also hinted at the valour and strength of the people of **Nahusha** (तवया यत सतवन्ते सधवीर **वीरास्त्रिवरूथेन नहुषा शविष्ठ** ॥). It means, the **Five Tribes** carry the traits of their great warrior ancestor, the king ***Nahusa*/Nahusha**.

In other words, as per the Poets of **Mandala-6**, the **Leaders of the Five Tribes** are famous for their braveness as like their ancestor ***Nahusa*/Nahusha**.

Additionally, there are some references in **Mandala-7, 5** and **9** (see verses **Rv-7.6,5**; **Rv-5.12.6; Rv-9.88,2**) that too indicate a close relation between **Nahusha** and the **Five Tribes**.

Moreover, the **Mandala-10** Composer in the verse **Rv-10.80,6** has specifically described that along with the People belonging to **Manu's clan** means **the Priests**, the Persons originated from **Nahusha** also worship **Agni of Yajna**. It means to say that **Mandala-10** Poet has proper information on the **origin of the Five Tribes of Rigved** or the **Warrior Tribes** who are now with the Priests and participate in **Yajna** ceremony with great zeal and enthusiasm.

**Rv-10.80,6:** *agniṃ viśa īḷate **mānuṣīryā** agniṃ **manuṣo nahuṣo** vijātāḥ |*

***agnirghāndharvīṃ** pathyāṃ **ṛta**sy**āgner**ghavyūtir**ghṛta** ā niṣattā ||*

Here the **Nahusha's People** actually means the **Five Tribes of Rigved** who are nothing but the **Kshatriyas** or **Warrior class** persons. As no one from **Bharata lineage** is seen in action after **Mandala-5**. Hence in the **Last Four Mandalas of Rigved,** the **Tribes of Nahusha** or the **Five Tribes of Rigved** automatically become the **Aryas/Vedic People,** but **other than the Priests** who support and participate in the **Yajna** ritual. In other words, the **Last Mandala Poet** of the said verse has divided the **Rigvedic Aryas** into two categories as given below.

**Manu's Clan—------Priestly Community/Thinkers/Philosophers**.

**Nahusha's Clan---- Ruling Class/Warriors/Fighters**.

Another **Last Mandala Poet** in the verse **Rv-10.49,8** has related the valour and strength of **Indra** with **Nahusha.** He further states that as compared to old timer **Indra**, present-day God **Indra** is much stronger than earlier ***Nahusa*** and hence he could kill **seven** at a time.

**Rv-10.49,8:** *ahaṃ saptahā **nahuṣo nahuṣṭaraḥ** prāśrāva yaṃ śavasā**turvaśaṃ yadum** |*
*ahaṃ nyanyaṃ sahasā sahas karaṃ navavrādhato navatiṃ ca vakṣayam* ||

Content of the above verse clearly manifests that **Nahusha** would have been the very powerful king of his time and therefore, Poet has used him as the **Standard of Comparison** for the **bravery and leadership**. Additionally, on behalf of **Indra**, Poet claims that due to regular worshipping of **Indra** in **Yajna,** now **Yadu** and **Turvasa** the **two among the Five Tribes** have become very successful in life and earned name and fame for themselves. It indirectly means **Turvasa** and **Yadu** have become devotees of **Indra** who often attend **Yajna.**

From the above discussion, it is apparent that the ancient king **Nahusha** would have been the mighty and authoritative character who lived during the **pre-Rigvedic period** and strongly opposed the entry of newly created god **Indra** in the Vedic world.

Content of the **Mandala-7** verse **Rv-7.95,2** hints at during the regime of king ***Nahusa***, river **Saraswati alone** used to complete **her full course** from the **mountain** (origin) to **sea**. It means, out of **several major rivers** of that region such as **Sutudri**, **Vipas**, **Parushni**, **Vitasta**, **Asikni** and **Yamuna**, river **Saraswati** was the **only fortunate stream** to meet the **sea directly**.

**Rv-7.95,2**: ***ekā**cetat **sarasvatī nadīnāṃ śuci**ryatī **ghiribhya ā samudrāt** |*
*rāyaścetantī bhuvanasya bhūrerghṛtaṃ **payo duduhe nāhuṣāya** ||*

Above verse implicitly informs us that the ancient king **Nahusha** lived on the bank of river **Saraswati** and ruled his kingdom from there. During the early part of his regime, river **Saraswati** used to carry water throughout the year, means the people of his kingdom did not face water scarcity at all. However, after sometime, when that area started receiving less rains, then the senior Rishis first came out with the idea of a demon **Vritra** to have taken water of the world in his captivity, and then shaped a new warrior God **Indra** to neutralise **Vritra**. In all probabilities, Supreme king **Nahusha** would have refused to toe the line of the old **Rishis** and forced the latter to leave his country. Therefore, unlike his ancestor Queen **Ila**, the generations of the Priestly Community had bad feelings or grudge about the king **Nahusha**.

As the **Mandala-6** Poet in the verse **Rv-6.61,9** particularly speaks about the spreading out the **realm of the Aryas** from the town located on the bank of river **Saraswati** to its west direction (poetically described as the regular movement of the **Sun from east to west**), then this description is applicable to only for the **pre-Rigvedic supreme king Nahusha** who was the **distinguished warrior** of his time and was known to the **ancestors of the Rigvedic Poets**. That is why, his name appears in some hymns of the **Early** and **Late Mandalas**. At the same time, Poets did not forget to designate him as the **ancestor of the Five Tribes** who as the children belonging to ancient **Royal Family**, must have spent their childhood on the bank of river **Saraswati** (see verse **Rv-6.61,12; *Panchajata Vardhayanti*/ पञ्च जाता वर्धयन्ती**).

Please bear in mind that, with the exception of the Poets of **Mandala-2**, **3**, and **4** (the term ***Nahusa*** is absent only in these **three successive Mandalas**); on some occasions, the Composers of remaining Seven Mandalas linked his name with the **Five Tribes** and always treated him as the **ancestors of the Five People**. After the death of ***Nahusa***, his kingdom would have been divided into **Five Separate Countries** that were independently governed by the **First Generation Leaders of the Five Tribes**. In brief, king **Nahusha** was the **great warrior** and the **true commander** of his army and hence could have extended his kingdom from the east of **Saraswati** to west of **Sindhu**. Therefore, Poets remember ***Nahusa*** as the ***fierce warrior***.

Please note that the Poet of the verse **Rv-10.49,8** did not compare valour and strength of **Indra** with Bharata king **Sudasa** despite the fact that the latter defeated the group of **Ten Kings** in a major war that has been reported in the three hymns of **Mandala-7**. This is because, **Vasistha** the **Lead Compose**r of **Mandala-7** firmly believed that it is **Indra** who helped king **Sudasa** to achieve victory over the **Ten Kings** (see the war hymn **Rv-7.18** that is addressed to **Indra** and other war hymn **Rv-7.83** that is jointly dedicated to **Indra-Varuna**).

It also means, expansion of the kingdom of **Aryas** would have occurred a long back, probably during **pre-Rigvedic time** itself as other than **Mandala-4** reference (see verse **Rv-4.30,18**), on no occasion, **Bharatas** (Poet has depicted God **Indra** is the real victor in the battle fought against **Arna** and **Chitraratha** who belonged to the class of **Aryas,** that took place on the bank of river **Sarayu**) had crossed river **Sindhu** to defeat someone in the western region.

**Note**: In the verses **Rv-1.122,8**; **10;** and **11; *Nahusa*** has been described as the **superb Hero**.

**In short**, the **Mandala-6 Poet** in the two consecutive verses; **Rv-6.61,9** and **10** has cryptically described the expansion of kingdom of the **Aryas** but also signalled the **spread of empire** took place from the **east to west** and that must have occurred during the **pre-Rigvedic**

**time** when the great hero and battler **Nahusha** was ruling his realm from the bank of river **Saraswati**, but well before the fashioning of a new warrior God **Indra**.

**Important names of the pre-Rigvedic Characters figure in the Mandala-1 and 10**

Some Vedic Experts often profess that the Rigvedic Poets cannot be trusted for reporting various events in the document as **they did not remember their own past**. Hence it is necessary to find out whether the generations of **Rigvedic Poets** had properly carried forward or orally transmitted their past history to the new generations of Priests.

To do so, it is needed to reopen the **Last Two Mandalas of Rigved (Mandala-1** and **10)**; specifically to look for **the names of the persons who lived prior to Rigvedic Period but influenced the Vedic Ideology**. Collected information on some names of **the distinguished characters** has been categorised into **1**. **Ancient Rishis**, and **2. Noble Persons**.

**1. Ancient Rishis**: Since **pre-Rigvedic time**, Vedic world is dominated by the two ancient families of Rishis and these are; a. **Angirasa**, and b. **Bhrigu**. **Rigved** informs us that, it is the **Bhrigus** who conceptualized the plan of **Yajna** ritual. Yet some Scholars say that the old **Bhrigus** landed in **Saraswati-Sindhu** Valley from ancient **Persia**. Therefore, we shall focus our attention on the key names of members of old **Bhrigu** family noticed in **Mandala-1** and **10 (**purposely excluded the **Ribhus)**.

**Atharvan: Rv-1,83,5; Rv-10.48,2; Rv-10.87,12; Rv-10.92,10; Rv-10.120,9**

**Athravans (plural): Rv-10.14,6**

**Atharvan and his son Dadhyach: Rv-1.80,16; Rv-1.116,12; Rv-1.117,22**

**Dadhyach: Rv-1.84,13; Rv-1.119,9; Rv-1.139,9; Rv-10.48,2**

**2. Noble Persons or the members of the Royal Family: Mandala-1** hymn **Rv-1.31** talks about Queen **Ila**, her son **Pururavas**, her descendant **Nahusha**, and **Yayati** (the son of **Nahusha)** the **four prominent members of ancient Noble Family** who had **no direct role in shaping Rigvedic text**, hence assumed to have lived during **pre-Rigvedic era**. Although references of **Ila** and **Nahusha** are found in some of the hymns of **Early Mandalas** as well, but the references pertaining to **Pururavas** and **Yayati** are found **only in Mandala-1** and **10** and the pertaining information is placed below.

**Pururavas- hymn Rv-10.95** describes mythical story of **Pururavas** living with **Apsara** together as **husband and wife,** wherein in the verse **Rv-10.95,18** the Composer has revealed the fact that **Pururavas is the son of Ila.**

**Yayati**- **Mandala-10** verse **Rv-10.63,1** clearly depicts **Yayati** is the son of **Nahusha,** but at that moment he has been shown to be with the ancient Rishis attending **Yajna,** probably as the special invitee.

In the verse **Rv-1.139,9** the Poet has explained that ancient Rishis like **Dadhyach**, old **Angirasa** as well as the current Poets from **Atri** and **Kanva** Families know the **true stories** behind the **birth of Indra** and the **origin of Agni of Yajna**.

**From the above discussion, it is evident that the generations Rigvedic Poets were well-versed with all major phases of Vedic Philosophy and the complete history of the persons behind its development since beginning.**

**Reference: 1. "Rig Veda" (Bilingual), Translated by Ralph T. H. Griffith (1896) in PDF.**